CLAIMS:

1. A pneumatic tire comprising:

steep-angle grooves provided at opposite sides of a tire equatorial plane of a tread, the steep-angle grooves each being inclined at an angle of not more than 45 degrees relative to a tire circumferential direction such that the steep-angle grooves contact the ground from a tire equatorial plane side, and an end portion of each of the steep-angle grooves at the tire equatorial plane side terminating within a land portion; and

recessed portions formed along a tread surface side edge of a land portion adjacent to an inner side in a tire axial direction of the steep-angle grooves, the depth of the recessed portions increasing and the width of the recessed portions decreasing from a middle portion in a longitudinal direction toward an end portion at the tire equatorial plane side of the steep-angle grooves.

2. The pneumatic tire as claimed in claim 1, wherein

an angle of a boundary line at the tire equatorial plane side between the recessed portions and a tread surface of the land portion relative to the tire circumferential direction is set to not more than 15 degrees in a plan view of the tread, and

an angle of a land portion side wall surface of the recessed portions relative to a line normal to a tread surface of the tread is set to not more than 30 degrees in a cross sectional view along a tire radial direction and intersecting the longitudinal direction of the steep-angle grooves.

3. The pneumatic tire as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein a boundary line at the tire equatorial plane side between the recessed portions and a tread surface of the land portion is arranged such that a boundary line of the recessed portions at one side of the tire equatorial

plane and a boundary line of the recessed portions at another side of the tire equatorial plane are respectively aligned in a straight line in the circumferential direction, or are spaced apart from each other at an outer side in the tire axial direction.

- 4. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the recessed portions are formed to extend from a middle portion in a longitudinal direction toward an end portion at the tire equatorial plane side of the steep-angle grooves, and the length of the recessed portions measured along the tire circumferential direction is set within a range of from 25 to 50 % of an arrangement pitch of the steep-angle grooves in the tire circumferential direction.
- 5. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the height of a deepest portion of each of the recessed portions measured from a groove bottom of an adjacent steep-angle groove toward an outer side in a tire radial direction is set within a range of from 25 to 75 % of the groove depth of the steep-angle grooves.
- 6. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the steep-angle grooves are arranged with a mutual phase difference in the circumferential direction provided at respective sides of the tire equatorial plane.
- 7. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the angle of the steep-angle grooves relative to the tire circumferential direction is set within a range of from 5 to 30 degrees.

- 8. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, further comprising transverse grooves provided at outer sides in the axial direction from the steep-angle grooves, wherein each of the transverse grooves opens at a tread ground contacting area end.
- 9. The pneumatic tire as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, further comprising circumferential grooves extending in the tire circumferential direction, each of the circumferential grooves being disposed in an area within 40 to 60 % from the tire equatorial plane side with respect to a tread half width that begins at the tire equatorial plane and ends at the tread ground contacting area end.